

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 069426  
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/PAN:RWYROUGH  
APPROVED BY S/AB - AMB. BUNKER  
S/AB - AMB. LINOWITZ  
S/S - MR. SEBASTIAN

-----292333Z 037060 /72-70

P R 292113Z MAR 77  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 069426

EXDIS FOR AMBASSADOR FROM BUNKER AND LINOWITZ

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PFOR/PN

SUBJECT:BUNKER-LINOWITZ VISIT

1. WE ARE PREPARING A SUMMARY REPORT OF OUR CONVERSATIONS IN CARACAS AND BOGOTA WHICH WE WILL SEND TO U.S. EMBASSY PANAMA AND TO OUR OTHER POSTS IN THE REGION. WE WILL ALSO POUCH DETAILED MEMCONS OF BOTH MEETINGS WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN COMPLETED. MEANWHILE, WE THOUGHT YOU SHOULD HAVE A BRIEF REPORT OF OUR MEETING IN BOGOTA WHICH HAD RESULTS GENERALLY SIMILAR TO OUR TALKS IN CARACAS.

2. LOPEZ-MICHELSON MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT SUCH AN IMPORTANT MATTER AS THE PANAMA CANAL NEGOTIATION IS BEING HANDLED AS A BI-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 069426

LATERAL ISSUE BETWEEN PANAMA AND THE UNITED STATES, RATHER THAN WITH OTHER, MORE ADVANCED COUNTRIES. DEALING WITH PANAMA IS LIKE SELLING PROPERTY TO A POOR MAN INSTEAD OF A-WEALTHY MAN--THERE IS ENDLESS HAGGLING OVER EVERY LITTLE DETAIL. NEGOTIATIONS WITH TORRIJOS TEND TO BE KAFKA-ESQUE AND SURREALISTIC. THEY ARE COMPLICATED BY THE TORRIJOS TENDENCY TO TALK FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION AND MAKE STATE-

MENTS THAT CAUSE PROBLEMS (E.G., REFERENCE TO PANAMA AS ANOTHER VIETNAM).

(B) HE SUGGESTED THAT THE UNITED STATES POSITIONS APPEAR REASONABLE, FORTHCOMING AND FLEXIBLE. AT THE SAME TIME IT WILL BE THE UNITED STATES THAT WILL BE BLAMED IF THE TALKS BREAK DOWN. IN THIS CONTEXT, IT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD THAT NO FUTURE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD ACCEPT LESS THAN WHAT TORRIJOS WILL ACCEPT NOW; THAT IS, TORRIJOS APPEARS MORE AMENABLE TO A TREATY SATISFACTORY TO THE UNITED STATES THAN ANYONE LIKELY TO FOLLOW HIM. HOWEVER, WHILE TORRIJOS NEEDS A TREATY IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT HE "WANTS" ONE.

(C) ON NEUTRALITY, A JOINT GUARANTEE BY THE UNITED STATES AND PANAMA, AS RESPECTIVELY THE ONLY SUPERPOWER IN THE HEMISPHERE AND THE COUNTRY IN WHOSE LAND THE CANAL IS LOCATED, APPEARS APPROPRIATE AND DESIRABLE (FAR BETTER THAN A UNITED NATIONS GUARANTEE WHICH WOULD INVOLVE PARTIES WITH CONTRARY OR NO INTEREST IN THE CANAL'S NEUTRALITY).

(D) HE AGREED THAT THE UNITED STATES POSTURE ON THE CANAL NEGOTIATIONS AND ON HUMAN RIGHTS EVIDENCES ITS GOOD INTENTIONS TOWARD LATIN AMERICA AND REFLECTS THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WANTS A NEW ERA IN UNITED STATES RELATIONS IN THE HEMISPHERE. IT IS EVIDENT THAT OBSTINACY BY TORRIJOS COULD DAMAGE UNITED STATES-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 069426

(E) COLOMBIA CANNOT JOIN VENEZUELA AND COSTA RICA IN ANY VENEZUELAN SPONSORED INFORMAL EFFORT TO CLARIFY PANAMA'S NEGOTIATING POSITION SINCE COLOMBIA IS A THIRD BUT SILENT PARTY TO THE NEGOTIATIONS. AS A CONTRACTUAL PARTY FOR THE THOMPSON-URRUTIA TREATY, COLOMBIA WANTS ITS RIGHTS PROTECTED AND DOES NOT WANT TO BE PERCEIVED AS A "PUPPET OF THE UNITED STATES."

3. LOPEZ-MICHELSON OFFERED NO SPECIFIC ADVICE AS TO WHAT THE UNITED STATES MIGHT OR SHOULD DO EXCEPT TO NOTE THAT IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS DEALING BILATERALLY WITH PANAMA;

4. NOW THAT WE HAVE RETURNED TO WASHINGTON WE ARE MOST INTERESTED IN LEARNING THE EXTENT TO WHICH PEREZ' "UNDERSTANDING" OF OUR POSITIONS ACCURATELY REFLECTS HIS VIEWS ON THE NEGOTIATIONS. WE WOULD APPRECIATE, THEREFORE, ANY INFORMATION WHICH YOU MAY ACQUIRE ABOUT THE NEGOTIATIONS OR THE PEREZ INITIATIVE IN THE AFTERMATH OF

OUR VISIT.

5. WE WILL PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS LATER CONCERNING THE  
NEGOTIATING PAPERS WE OFFERED TO FURNISH PEREZ.  
CHRISTOPHER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** CANALS, NEGOTIATIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 29-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977STATE069426  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** RWYROUGH  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D770108-0075  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:**  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1977/newtext/t19770310/aaaaails.tel  
**Line Count:** 121  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 959407ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ORIGIN SS  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 22-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 2935013  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** BUNKER-LINOWITZ VISIT  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PN, PQ, CO, US, (LOPEZ MICHELSEN, ALFONSO)  
**To:** CARACAS  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/959407ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009